BRITISH COLUMBIA

BC STATS

Service BC
Ministry of Labour and Citizens' Services

Data Services
(250) 387-0327
BC.Stats@gov.bc.ca
December 28, 2006
Issue: 06-12

Current Statistics ◆ December 2006

- **British Columbia's unemployment rate increased to 4.9% (*seasonally adjusted*) in November as employment in the province fell slightly (-0.2%) while the labour force was unchanged from October.** There were fewer jobs in the service sector (-1.0%), which employs eight out of every ten working British Columbians. Information, culture & recreational services (-4.5%), health care (-4.1%) and professional, scientific & technical services (-3.5%) posted particularly large declines. Employment in goods industries jumped 2.6%, with relatively strong job growth more or less across the board. Manufacturing employment increased (+1.9%) for a third straight month, and in the construction industry, employment picked up (+0.6%) after a three-month long downturn.

  Reflecting the job growth in the goods sector, which employs more men than women, the number of men with jobs increased 0.3% but fewer women (-0.8%) were employed in November. For the second month in a row, full-time employment (-0.8%) fell, but there were more (+2.0%) part-time workers.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

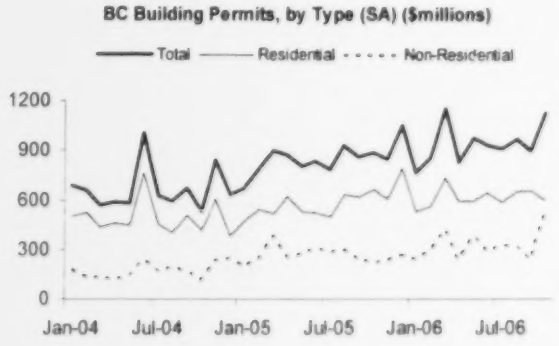
- **Housing starts in BC eased in November, dropping 7.1% (*seasonally adjusted*), following an 8.0% rise in October.** Canadian starts were relatively flat (+0.8%), reflecting decreases in three of the four largest provinces and steady increases in several others. New home building activity was down in Ontario (-3.5%) and Quebec (-10.0%), but was significantly higher in Alberta (+36.9%).

  Data Source: CMHC

- **The value of building permits issued by BC municipalities surged ahead (+26.0%, *seasonally adjusted*) in October, more than recovering from a 7.4% drop in September.** Permits for residential projects slipped (-9.4%) but shot up for other types of buildings (+124.1%) as planned spending for institutional & government projects jumped 93.5% and nearly tripled (+188.2%) for commercial buildings. However, the value of permits issued for industrial projects (-47.4%) saw a significant downturn from September. Non-residential permits have been volatile since March, and the latest increase followed a 26.1% decline in September.

  Canadian permits climbed 6.1%, as increased activity in Quebec (+19.7%), BC and parts of Atlantic Canada offset slowdowns in Ontario (-1.8%) and the Prairie provinces. The value of non-residential permits issued in Canada jumped 9.1% in October and permits for residential projects (+4.3%) were also up.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada



- **Exports of BC products expanded 2.1% (*seasonally adjusted*) in October, building on a 4.3% increase in the previous month.** The export growth reflected a jump (+11.8%) in the value of industrial & consumer goods, particularly to overseas markets. Shipments of energy (+0.4%) and machinery, equipment & automotive (+2.0%) products increased, but at a slower pace than in September. However, exports of forestry (-1.7%) and agriculture & fish (-3.3%) products slipped.

  Export growth in October was largely due to a 3.9% increase in shipments to overseas

markets while US-bound shipments were up slightly (+0.9%).

Data Source: Statistics Canada & BC Stats

- **Shipments of goods manufactured in British Columbia rose slightly (+0.9%, *seasonally adjusted*) in October, mirroring a slip in September (-0.9%).** Durable manufacturers saw an increase (+1.3%) in the value of shipments, as non-metallic minerals (+6.7%), fabricated metals (+6.5%), transportation equipment (+6.4%), computer & electronic products (+5.6%) and primary metals (+2.9%) all posted significant gains. However, shipments by the wood industry were down (-2.1%) for the fifth time since May. Driven by increases in the plastics & rubber (+2.0%), chemical (+0.9%) and paper (+0.3%) industries, non-durable goods managed to inch up (+0.3%) despite a drop in shipments by the food industry (-1.5%).

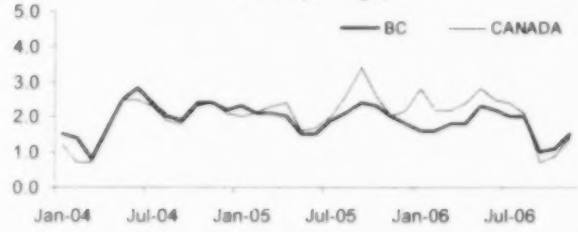
  Across the nation, shipments were flat (-0.1%) in October due to continued volatility in the transportation equipment sector and falling prices. Six provinces made gains, with Newfoundland & Labrador (+7.1%), and Nova Scotia (+6.4%), posting the most significant growth. However, these were not enough to offset declines in Ontario (-0.4%), Alberta (-1.9%) and New Brunswick (-10.6%).

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **British Columbia's year-over-year inflation rate stood at 1.5% in November, up slightly from October (1.1%).** The cost of energy products (-0.8%) continued to ease, such that excluding energy, the overall Consumer Price Index (CPI) would have been slightly higher (+1.7%). Despite falling prices for piped gas (-10.4%) and fuel oil (-15.5%), the cost of shelter was up 2.0%. Residents paid more for other utilities such as water (+9.1%) and electricity (+4.0%) than in the same month last year. The cost of home insurance (+7.2%) and maintenance & repairs (+2.1%) also took a bigger chunk out of the household budget. Drivers paid less at the pump (-0.6%) in November but transportation costs were up (+1.1%) as prices for operating (+2.3%) and insuring (+5.0%) a motor vehicle were also higher than last year. The cost of food climbed by 3.0% as grocery bills (+2.5%) and restaurant meals (+4.2%) were more pricey. Prices for clothing & footwear (+1.6%) were also higher than in October of 2005.

  Health & personal care was more costly (+1.9%) than last year as was tuition (+1.9%), though British Columbians enjoyed lower prices for recreational equipment & services (-5.4%). *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

BC and Canada Inflation Trend (% change, same month year ago)



- **Sales by retailers in the province edged down (-0.1%, seasonally adjusted) in October, after dropping 0.7% in the previous month.** None of the provinces made gains and Saskatchewan (-2.2%) posted the most significant decline in sales. At the national level, sales were off 0.7% in October as sales in the automotive sector continued to slide. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Wholesale sales in BC strengthened in October, expanding 1.9% (*seasonally adjusted*) following a 4.9% slip in September.** Canadian sales were relatively flat (-0.2%), with six provinces posting decreases.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **Production at BC's sawmills and planing mills was flat (+0.1%, year-over-year) in October.** Although mills in the Interior (+3.0%) produced more lumber, production at Coastal mills was down substantially (-16.1%). Canadian lumber production was 1.7% lower than in the same month last year.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

MONTHLY STATISTICS

	UNITS	REFERENCE PERIOD	CURRENT			MONTHLY AVERAGE YEAR-TO-DATE	
			LATEST MONTH	% CHANGE FROM LAST MONTH	% CHANGE FROM YEAR AGO	AMOUNT	% CHANGE FROM YEAR AGO
PRICES							
Consumer Price Index-BC	1992=100	Nov '06	128.1	0.3	1.5	127.4	1.7
Consumer Price Index-Vancouver	1992=100	Nov '06	129.1	0.4	2.1	128.0	1.8
Consumer Price Index-Victoria	1992=100	Nov '06	127.8	0.2	0.9	127.4	1.6
Consumer Price Index-Canada	1992=100	Nov '06	130.0	0.2	1.4	129.9	2.0
Consumer Price Index-USA	1982-84=100	Nov '06	201.5	-0.1	2.0	201.6	3.3
Industry Price Index-Canada	1997=100	Oct '06	113.4	-0.1	1.2	113.6	2.2
LABOUR							
Unemployment Rate (SA)*-BC	Percent	Nov '06	4.9	(4.6)	(4.9)	4.7	(5.9)
Unemployment Rate (SA)-Canada	Percent	Nov '06	6.3	(6.2)	(6.4)	6.3	(6.8)
Unemployment Rate (SA)-USA	Percent	Nov '06	4.5	(4.4)	(5.0)	4.7	(5.1)
Unemployed (SA)-BC	Thousand	Nov '06	114.2	6.0	2.5	108.1	-19.4
Employed (SA)-BC	Thousand	Nov '06	2,208.5	-0.2	1.8	2,192.9	3.1
Labour Force (SA)-BC	Thousand	Nov '06	2,322.7	0.0	1.9	2,301.0	1.8
Participation Rate (SA)-BC	Percent	Nov '06	65.7	(65.8)	(65.7)	65.6	(65.7)
Regular EI Benefits Paid	$Million	Oct '06	50.9	7.2	-13.8	61.4	-14.1
Regular EI Beneficiaries	Persons	Oct '06	34,170	5.6	-21.6	44,282	-17.5
Average Weekly Wage Rate-BC	Dollars	Nov '06	739.68	1.0	3.0	724.77	2.9
Wages and Salaries-BC (SA)	$Million	Sep '06	6,701.9	-0.3	7.3	6,604.5	8.1
Fixed-Weighted Earnings Index-BC	1996=100	Oct '06	119.5	1.1	3.0	117.8	1.8
PRODUCTION-B.C.							
Lumber-Cubic Metres	Thousand	Oct '06	3,614.4	9.4	0.1	3,520.7	1.2
Market Pulp Shipments-Tonnes	Thousand	Oct '06	408	-3.1	-8.7	404	-0.5
Newsprint Shipments-Tonnes	Thousand	Oct '06	81	1.3	-12.0	88	-1.0
Other Paper Shipments-Tonnes	Thousand	Oct '06	172	4.9	-0.6	164	5.7
Oil-Cubic Metres	Thousand	Aug '06	140.6	1.4	-4.4	137.3	-8.7
Natural Gas-Cubic Metres	Million	Aug '06	3,054.3	16.9	2.3	2,849.2	8.0
Electric Power Generated	GW.h	Sep '06	4,307.3	-14.4	-23.1	4,965.9	-8.7
Manufacturing Shipments (SA)	$Million	Oct '06	3,522.5	0.9	1.4	3,505.0	2.9
GENERAL							
Housing Starts-All Areas BC(SAAR)**	Thousand	Nov '06	33.9	-7.4	-0.3	36.6	7.0
Housing Starts-USA (SAAR)**	Thousand	Nov '06	1,588.0	6.7	-25.5	1,837.0	-11.7
Building Permits-BC (SA)	$Million	Oct '06	1,126.2	26.0	27.3	937.6	13.0
Residential-BC (SA)	$Million	Oct '06	595.2	-9.4	-10.1	611.3	9.4
Non-Residential-BC (SA)	$Million	Oct '06	531.0	124.1	138.6	326.3	20.4
Retail Sales (NAICS) (SA)-BC	$Million	Oct '06	4,482.6	-0.1	5.7	4,431.3	6.7
Wholesale Trade (NAICS) (SA)-BC	$Million	Oct '06	4,363.6	1.9	8.9	4,250.7	8.8
Tourism Room Revenues (SA)-BC	$Thousand	Aug '06	152,389	-0.3	8.8	148,865	8.0
Business Bankruptcies-BC	Number	Oct '06	42	-16.0	-36.4	51	-23.6
Consumer Bankruptcies-BC	Number	Oct '06	587	0.7	-4.6	606	-12.8
Incorporations-BC	Number	Nov '06	2,454	-2.2	-0.6	2,573	8.2
Exports Originating in BC (SA)	$Million	Oct '06	2,843.5	2.1	-5.7	2,803.5	0.2

December 28, 2006

*SA indicates seasonal adjustment.

**SAAR indicates seasonally adjusted at annual rates.

Brackets () indicate that rates are shown instead of percentage changes.

ANNUAL STATISTICS

	UNITS	YEAR 2005	YEAR 2004	YEAR 2003	PERCENT CHANGE 2004-2005	PERCENT CHANGE 2003-2004
PRICES						
Consumer Price Index-BC	1992=100	125.3	122.8	120.4	2.0	2.0
Consumer Price Index-Vancouver	1992=100	125.7	123.4	121.0	1.9	2.0
Consumer Price Index-Victoria	1992=100	125.5	122.8	120.0	2.2	2.3
Consumer Price Index-Canada	1992=100	127.3	124.6	122.3	2.2	1.9
Consumer Price Index-USA*	1982-84=100	195.3	188.9	184.0	3.4	2.7
Industry Price Index-Canada*	1997=100	111.2	109.5	106.2	1.6	3.1
LABOUR						
Unemployment Rate-BC	Percent	5.9	7.2	8.0		
Unemployment Rate-Canada	Percent	6.8	7.2	7.6		
Unemployment Rate-USA*	Percent	5.1	5.5	6.0		
Unemployed-BC	Thousand	132.9	159.2	176.0	-16.5	-9.5
Employed-BC	Thousand	2,130.5	2,062.7	2,014.7	3.3	2.4
Labour Force-BC	Thousand	2,263.4	2,221.9	2,190.7	1.9	1.4
Participation Rate-BC	Percent	65.6	65.5	65.6		
Total EI Benefits Paid-BC*	$Million	1,650.3	1,764.0	1,831.3	-6.4	-3.7
Regular EI Benefits Paid-BC*	$Million	837.4	960.4	1,059.5	-12.8	-9.4
Average Weekly Wage Rate-BC	Dollars	704.49	686.74	683.68	2.6	0.4
Wages and Salaries-BC*	$Million	73,916.0	69,365.6	65,310.1	6.6	6.2
Fixed-Weighted Earnings Index-BC*	1996=100	115.9	112.9	108.5	2.7	4.1
PRODUCTION-B.C.						
Lumber-Cubic Metres*	Thousand	41,012.9	39,879.3	36,030.9	2.8	10.7
Market Pulp Shipments-Tonnes*	Thousand	4,932	4,724	4,762	4.4	-0.8
Newsprint Shipments-Tonnes*	Thousand	1,076	1,135	1,186	-5.2	-4.3
Other Paper Shipments-Tonnes*	Thousand	1,877	1,841	1,733	2.0	6.2
Coal-Tonnes*	Thousand	25,571.0	27,082.0	23,061.0	-5.6	17.4
Oil-Cubic Metres*	Thousand	1,765.7	2,019.0	2,168.2	-12.5	-6.9
Natural Gas-Cubic Metres*	Million	31,892.8	31,201.3	29,483.4	2.2	5.8
Electric Power Generated*	GW.h	67,627.3	60,495.6	63,050.9	11.8	-4.1
Solid Mineral Shipments	$Million	4,862.9	3,674.5	2,926.5	32.3	25.6
Farm Cash Receipts**	$Million	2,383.8	2,401.7	2,283.3	-0.7	5.2
Manufacturing Shipments*	$Million	41,139.8	42,303.5	39,691.0	-2.8	6.6
GENERAL						
Housing Starts-All Areas BC**	Thousand	34.7	32.9	26.2	5.3	25.8
Housing Starts-USA	Thousand	2,068.3	1,955.8	1,847.7	5.8	5.9
Building Permits-BC*	$Million	10,191.1	7,938.7	6,394.2	28.4	24.2
Residential-BC*	$Million	6,979.0	5,868.9	4,514.2	18.9	30.0
Non-Residential-BC*	$Million	3,212.1	2,069.8	1,880.1	55.2	10.1
Retail Sales (NAICS)-BC*	$Million	49,914.5	47,216.6	44,421.0	5.7	6.3
Wholesale Trade (NAICS)-BC*	$Million	47,277.0	43,521.2	39,658.9	8.6	9.7
Tourism Room Revenues-BC*	$Thousand	1,690.1	1,592.2	1,486.7	6.2	7.1
Business Bankruptcies-BC	Number	786	922	1,002	-14.8	-8.0
Consumer Bankruptcies-BC	Number	8,173	8,378	9,385	-2.4	-10.7
Incorporations-BC*	Number	28,593	25,428	23,243	12.4	9.4
Exports Originating in BC*	$Million	34,141.9	30,977.6	28,189.3	10.2	9.9
Capital Expenditures-BC	$Million	32,256.7	29,664.7	25,434.1	8.7	16.6
Population-BC (as of July 1)	Thousand	4,257,833	4,203,315	4,155,370	1.3	1.2

December 28, 2006

* derived from monthly figures

**derived from quarterly figures

ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT ($ MILLIONS)

	YEAR				PERCENT CHANGE		
	2005	2004	2003	2002	04-05	03-04	02-03
BRITISH COLUMBIA							
Gross Domestic Product at Market Prices	168,855	157,540	145,763	138,193	7.2	8.1	5.5
Real Gross Domestic Product (chained 1997 $)	145,501	140,263	134,131	130,445	3.7	4.6	2.8
CANADA							
Gross Domestic Product at Market Prices	1,371,425	1,290,788	1,213,408	1,152,905	6.2	6.4	5.2
Real GDP at Market Prices (chained 1997 $)	1,157,705	1,124,688	1,088,773	1,069,282	2.9	3.3	1.8
UNITED STATES (Billions $US) **							
Gross Domestic Product at Market Prices	12,455.8	11,712.5	10,960.8	10,469.6	6.3	6.9	4.7
Real GDP at Market Prices (chained 2000 $US)	11,048.6	10,703.5	10,301.0	10,048.8	3.2	3.9	2.5

*** US Department of Commerce (actual)*

INTEREST AND EXCHANGE RATES

(Source: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics)

	Dec. 27/06	Dec. 20/06	Nov. 29/06	Dec. 28/05
	PERCENT PER ANNUM			
CANADA				
Prime Business Rate	6.00	6.00	6.00	5.00
Bank Rate	4.50	4.50	4.50	3.50
Long-Term Government Bond Rate (over 10 yrs)	-	4.10		4.04
Conventional Mortgages - 1 Year	6.30	6.30	6.40	5.80
- 5 Years	6.45	6.45	6.55	6.30
UNITED STATES				
Prime Rate	8.25	8.25	8.25	7.25
EXCHANGE RATES (average noon)	CANADIAN $			
US Dollar	1.1612	1.1486	1.1360	1.1639
Japanese Yen	0.0098	0.0097	0.0098	0.0099
British Pound	2.2718	2.2570	2.2141	2.0049
Euro	1.5241	1.5143	1.4933	1.3822

FORECASTS

	2006			2007		
	REAL GDP % CHG	UNEMP RATE %	CPI % CHG	REAL GDP % CHG	UNEMP RATE %	CPI % CHG
BRITISH COLUMBIA						
B.C. Government (September 2006, First Quarter Report)	3.6	4.8	2.0	3.1	5.1	2.0
Credit Union Central BC (October 2006)	4.2	4.4	1.8	4.0	3.6	1.9
Conference Board of Canada (October 23, 2006)	3.9	4.7	na	3.2	4.6	na
Scotia Economics (December 15, 2006)	4.0	4.7	na	3.4	4.4	na
TD Bank (September 28, 2006)	4.0	4.6	2.0	3.0	5.3	1.8
CIBC WM Economics (October 31, 2006)	4.5	4.7	1.7	3.6	4.6	2.1
Global Insight (November 2006)	4.1	4.7	1.6	3.0	4.7	1.7
CANADA						
TD Bank (September 18, 2006)	2.8	6.3	2.4	2.3	6.5	1.9
CIBC WM Economics (December 8, 2006)	2.8	6.3	2.0	2.3	6.5	2.0
Global Insight (November 2006)	2.8	6.3	2.0	2.4	6.4	1.6
UNITED STATES						
TD Bank (September 18, 2006)	3.4	4.8	3.5	2.4	5.5	2.5
CIBC WM Economics (December 8, 2006)	3.3	4.6	3.2	2.2	5.1	2.7
Global Insight (November 2006)	3.3	4.6	3.3	2.4	4.8	2.1